

# REVIEWS

*The Aylesbury Association for the Protection of Persons and Property, 1785–1985.* Elliott Viney.

Nothing could be more essentially English than the Aylesbury Association for the Protection of Persons and Property, which, as Elliott Viney tells us in this attractive booklet, celebrated its 200th birthday last year. Membership has grown since the last war to such an extent that the committee has had to impose a limit of 320, which has led to the creation of a waiting list. 'For a society which does absolutely nothing except to enjoy one convivial evening every year this is a phenomenon which defies rational explanation.' Yes. But every reader of *Records* will understand it.

The Association started with 43 members (including four ladies), and the subscription was 2s 6d. It was a form of insurance against legal costs in an age when detection and prosecution of crime depended mainly on individual initiative; but what events—what particular series of offences—led to its creation is quite unknown. The offences for whose detection and successful prosecution rewards were offered do not give the impression of a particularly menacing crime wave: Mr Dell's pigeons were stolen, Mr Rickford's garden was robbed, Mr Todd lost some stakes and hurdles. In 1794 the most serious offence was the maiming of one of Mr Todd's cows. In 1799 some joker removed the door of the local lock-up.

The secretary was voted an annual salary of one guinea, and nothing better illustrates the Association's attitude to the passage of the

years than the fact that that, or rather its decimal equivalent, is what he receives today. Nevertheless there have been only eight secretaries in the entire 200 years.

The Association's last effort to discharge its original function seems to have been in 1942, when a poster was issued seeking information about damage to Mr Evvett's property in Turnfurlong. As long ago as 1898 efforts were being made to get the Association to extend its activities, but they were regularly defeated by motions that 'the Association be carried on as heretofore'. Long may it continue.

J.C.T.

*The Buckinghamshire Posse Comitatus 1798.* Ed. Ian F. W. Beckett. Buckinghamshire Record Society No. 22, 1985. ISBN 0 801198 18 8.

The Buckinghamshire Record Society can seldom have published anything more useful to historians than this volume. Nothing else at all comparable exists for the years between the Muster Certificates of 1522 and the census of 1841, and ours is the only county whose *Posse Comitatus* survives. It was compiled in response to the threat of invasion from revolutionary France, and lists all males between the ages of 16 and 60, with their occupations. It will be mined for years by demographers and social historians, both local and national.

Dr Beckett, who is Lecturer in War Studies at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, has undertaken an heroic labour in editing the text, which contains over 23,500 names: and on the *Posse* as a military document he is a sure guide.

On the *Posse* as a social document it has to be said that his grasp is less firm. He has been, for example, much too trustful of the copyists through whose hands the text has passed, and this has led him into absurdities. There was never any such trade as 'Slaisterer'; there was, however, a way of writing a P in which the upper loop is formed in one stroke with the shaft, which in turn has a reverse curve at the foot. It is found occasionally in the handwriting of people whose letters were little practised, and it can easily be taken for a long S. The Lathbury constable evidently used it, and a clerk has duly copied his 'Plaisterer' as 'Slaisterer'. A similar misreading (not of course by Dr Beckett) has led to the ridiculous 'Saviour', which could safely have been amended to 'Paviour' (Glossary and Little Brickhill).

There are other confusions over some of the trades. A Hamemaker (Glossary) is *not* a 'Maker of collars for draught horses'. Hames are the curved brass 'horns' attached to the outside of the collar. The collar itself was made by the collarmaker, who should therefore appear under 'Horse Trades' and not among 'Textile and related Craftsmen', where he will inevitably be taken for a clothing worker. It is interesting that some men were both collarmakers and lacepillowmakers: both articles had to be very tightly stuffed and must have involved similar skills and tools.

Similarly shovelmakers do not belong among 'Metal Craftsmen'. The shovels they made were of wood throughout, and were used by maltsters for turning grain on the malting floor and loading it into the kiln. Speculation is fuelled by the fact that the Chenies shovelmakers bore the same name as one of the maltsters of Ivinghoe. But only Edlesborough had both shovelmakers and a maltster.

Other points like this could be made (a cakeman was not an agricultural worker in 1798), and it cannot be denied that they are blemishes. But we are not the less in debt to Dr Beckett for making available to us so rich a store of data to analyse and tabulate and torture into yielding history. How interesting to

be able to plot the distribution of coal merchants and corn factors, printers and tallow chandlers. How tantalising that there should be two miller's sons at Drayton Parslow but no miller. How odd that three people should be described simply as 'young man'.

One word of caution is necessary before we plunge in. The uses to which the data can be put are restricted by the lack of any consistent basis for classification in the original returns. We have, for example, 60 dairymen, 12 people who were 'dairyman & farmer' and 44 who are 'farmer & dairyman'. But we also have 2,017 'farmers', and no clue to how many of these were dairy farmers.

It is clear, however, that trades were less widely spread than in the seventeenth century: Amersham, for example, had lost its glovers and pipemakers (listed here under 'Wood and related Craftsmen!'), its fellmonger and its sievemaker. But it still has a Maycock working as a bricklayer and a Hobbs making horse collars, as it had a hundred years earlier. An impression of a dearth of clay-based trades is perhaps to be explained by their concentration in Coleshill, then in Herts.

One final complaint: it would have been useful to people who are not familiar with South Bucks (and perhaps even to some who are) to have been told that Waterside, Botley and Ashley Green, though not adjacent in the text, are all townships of Chesham.

J.C.T.

*Call to Arms*. Ian F.W. Beckett, pp. 144. Barracuda Books Ltd, 1985. ISBN 0 86023 245 X.

Dr Beckett's history of Buckinghamshire's voluntary forces from Anglo-Saxon times to 1985, which concludes with a brief section on regular units, neatly complements the two recent volumes from the Buckinghamshire Record Society. The current plight of publishing (the major publishers' main question today seems to be: how can we sell this in the American market?) has set him a difficult task. In a book 144 pages long there are eighty-

three and a half pages of illustrations and as a result the text is enormously compressed. There is plenty of hard fact, and the book will remain the obvious point of reference for all those who want to settle arguments on the subject. But Dr Beckett's aim is to add to the history of the various units something of the social setting within which they flourished. This is what causes the problems: there is only room for a brief mention of the *Posse Comitatus* (which he has edited) in a paragraph about the administrative changes in the Napoleonic Wars. Two sentences really cannot do justice to Joseph Mayett's vivid account of his service at the period. The pages covering the origins of the militia up to the nineteenth century are informative and useful.

The best part of the book covers the nineteenth and early twentieth century, where Dr Beckett's command of the subject enables him to compress what he has to say elegantly, and intertwine the social and military dimensions in Buckinghamshire with a complex and changing national legislative framework. The chapters on the first and second world wars bring out succinctly the part played by Buckinghamshire units. By contrast the brief chapter on the Territorial Army since 1945 is a mind-boggling sequence of disbandments, switches, and mergers. This may be an accurate reflection of events, but could have been better listed in an appendix.

The social dimension is also neatly encapsulated by Dr Beckett in various ways: Aylesbury's recurrent hostility to militia formations in the eighteenth and nineteenth century; attempts by labourers' friendly societies to stop benefit to those who volunteered; the social distinctions in the composition of the militia, yeomanry and volunteers.

Whatever the book has lost by having such a compressed text is compensated for by an excellent choice of illustrations which portray Buckinghamshire's Citizen Soldiers and their leaders from the seventeenth century onwards. Many of the best cover the first and second world wars, but the nineteenth century section with its reproduction of posters, letters and

plans as well as pictures of parades and camps is particularly enjoyable. The part-time soldiers of Buckinghamshire were an important part of the social fabric over the centuries. Their parades reminded all sections of society of a long-standing military tradition. One important part of that presence was the rousing music of military bands—but in this nicely produced book there is no room for even a sentence about them!

John Broad

*The Catuvellauni*. Keith Branigan, pp. 225. Alan Sutton, 1985. ISBN 0 86299 255 9. £10.95 (hardback).

This comprehensive and well-produced book is the work of a son of Bucks and is dedicated to Jack Head, author of the pioneering *Early Man in South Bucks*. *The Catuvellauni* is the eighth volume in the Peoples of Roman Britain series, each one dealing with a tribal *civitas* and each written by a well-known expert in Roman Britain generally and in the relevant area specifically. Professor Branigan is the series editor and the layout of his book follows the common pattern, comprising chapters on the tribal territory and the pre-Roman Iron Age, history AD43 to 367, communications and urban settlement, rural settlement, industry and the economy, and finally the later fourth and fifth centuries.

Surprisingly, the book does not stress that the only existing ancient documentary source to name the Catuvellauni as a British tribe was the historian, Cassius Dio, in his account of the Claudian invasion. It ignores the geographer Ptolemy who provided the sole documentary record of the location of the tribal canton in Roman Britain. It does mention the only known epigraphic record, undated, of the existence of a *civitates catuvellaunorum* on a stone from Hadrian's wall, but omits the tombstone inscribed *Regina . . . Catvallauna* found at South Shields. On the forum inscription from Verulamium, of which it is a pity the book does not reproduce and discuss possible reconstructions, the balance of opinion is that the tribal suffix that was usual in the names of *civitas* capitals was missing. This is true also of

surviving written references, such as the Antonine Itinerary. However, since Verulamium was the only *polis* credibly ascribed by Ptolemy to the Catuvellauni, it must have been the tribal capital.

The Catuvellauni were not named by Caesar in *De Bello Gallico*. In the discussion in *The Catuvellauni* as to the possible relation of this tribe to tribes mentioned by Caesar, a point not considered is whether the name of the British leader, Cassivellaunus, indicated that he belonged to the Cassi. This tribe was among those mentioned by Caesar as offering to surrender before his attack on the *oppidum* of Cassivellaunus. Scission in tribes was common during the Gallic wars. Caesar's description of that attack suggested that only the base troops of Cassivellaunus were trapped and his supplies captured, while such of his mobile chariot force as was present escaped. The subsequent seeking of terms by Cassivellaunus was particularly linked by Caesar to the defection of the tribes rather than to the military reverses actually suffered by his principal antagonist.

In *The Catuvellauni*, among the towns, we learn preponderantly about Verulamium, which is not surprising since this deserted site has always been a magnet, first for despoilers, later for spinners of legends, and in modern times for serious excavators. However, even at Verulamium only a fraction of the area has been excavated and in the smaller urban settlements even less.

Dealing with communications, it is disappointing to find the work of the Viatores on Roman roads in the area virtually dismissed. Looking at the illustrations showing the road system of the *civitas*, it is obvious that there must have been a network of minor roads and, from the disposition of settlements, villas and industrial sites, one might reasonably deduce that there had been roads closely following, if not in detail coincident with, quite a few of the roads traced by the Viatores.

The chapters on rural settlement and on industry and the economy, make it clear that the *civitas* had a flourishing base of mixed

agriculture, backed-up by productive iron-working, pottery and tile manufactories, as well as stone and slate quarries. The number of minor towns and other settlements, together with the number of villas and farmsteads, in the canton, indicate a considerable density of population. The author argues convincingly that the minor towns grew naturally from marketing needs rather than by imposition of an 'administered market' system.

Perhaps it is the final chapter dealing with the shadowy decline of Verulamium which provides the most food for thought. Here archaeology is confirming that there was indeed a still-functioning organized community well into the fifth century as described in the biography of St Germanus of Auxerre who visited the town in 428 and 446/7.

Professor Branigan's book, with its up-to-date, detailed treatment, its comprehensive references and bibliography, will long remain the standard popular work about those British who were our predecessors in our county and its neighbours.

R.P.H.

*English Baptist Records: I. The General Baptist Church of Berkhamsted, Chesham and Tring.* Transcribed by the Revd L. G. Champion, pp. xiv + 116. Baptist Historical Society, 1985. £8.00.

For over a century Nonconformist church records have been appearing at a leisurely pace, while the more recent growth of interest stimulated by the formation of County Record Offices has increased the demand for such primary sources to be made generally available. This is particularly important where MSS remain in the unpredictable keeping of church officers. The Chesham book, fortunately in the custody of the Record Office, now published as the first in a new series of Baptist records, appears in a cheap paper-covered format far removed from the earlier publications of the Baptist Historical Society which, in 1912, included the records of the Upper Meeting in Amersham and of the church of Ford or Cud-

dington. While it is not impossible even today to produce a volume to a higher standard, at least one capable of rebinding, which this is not, the enterprise of the Society is nevertheless greatly to be welcomed.

Although the Church Book is much concerned with matters of discipline, it covers many other aspects of church life including preaching appointments, the custody of trust deeds, the holding of fasts, and the existence in 1751 of a small chapel library. Unfortunately many relevant subject headings do not appear in the index and the user has, for example, to search hard for the five scattered references to the meeting-house in Chesham, or the three

instances of the observance of the 'day called Christmas day'. The one page reproduced in facsimile indicates that the transcription is not without error (&c omitted) and shows that the spelling has been tidied up with the loss of the colloquial 'summonsed' and other innocent spellings which add colour and cause no inconvenience. The absence of a transcriber's preface is particularly to be regretted and the lack of a physical description of the MS is unpardonable. Dr Arnold Baines has contributed a valuable general Introduction in which the complexities of beliefs and the internal differences amongst the General Baptists are clearly set out.

Christopher Stell